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Chairman: Mr. Kmoníček ..... (Czech Republic)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Kuznetsov

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Organization of work

1. **The Chairman** drew attention to a letter dated 24 May 2004 from the Acting President of the General Assembly addressed to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee (A/C.5/58/1/Add.4) informing him that the General Assembly had decided to allocate to the Committee sub-item (j) of agenda item 17, entitled "Appointment of a member of the International Civil Service Commission", and agenda item 170, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Operation in Burundi".

Agenda item 167: Financing of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (A/58/788 and A/58/806)

2. **Ms. Pollard** (Director of the Peacekeeping Financing Division), introducing the report of the Secretary-General containing the proposed budget for the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) for the period from 4 April 2004 to 30 June 2005 (A/58/788), said that the Security Council, by its resolution 1528 (2004), had established UNOCI for an initial period of 12 months from 4 April 2004 and had requested the Secretary-General to transfer authority from the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (MINUCI) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) forces to UNOCI.

3. The total budget requirements for UNOCI were $101,061,200 for the period from 4 April 2004 to 30 June 2004, and $401,293,200 for the period from 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005, an amount that covered the Operation's personnel and assets and the transfer of equipment with an estimated replacement value of $12.5 million from the strategic deployment stocks. The General Assembly was requested to take the actions set out in paragraph 102 of the report, including the establishment of a special account for UNOCI and appropriation and assessment of the sums needed to establish and maintain the Operation.

4. **Mr. Kuznetsov** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on the proposed UNOCI budget for the period from 4 April 2004 to 30 June 2005 (A/58/806), said that the total resource requests of $502,354,400 included the amount of $49,943,300 which the Advisory Committee had previously authorized. The Advisory Committee recommended reducing the proposed allocation for the period from 4 April to 30 June 2004 by $4,693,100 to $96,368,100. It also recommended reducing the proposed allocation for the period from 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005 by 50 per cent to $200,646,600 to cover requirements for the six months until 31 December 2004. In accordance with section I, paragraph 4, of General Assembly resolution 49/233, it requested submission of a revised budget in September 2004, when real needs would be easier to determine in the light of updated vacancy information and progress in streamlining the Operation's organizational structure and signing memorandums of understanding.

5. The Advisory Committee commended the Secretariat for giving UNOCI a well-defined, results-based framework and for its efforts to align the Operation's components and expected accomplishments with the mandate given in Security Council resolution 1528 (2004). It welcomed the imminent signing of the status-of-forces agreement, but noted that the status of negotiation of memorandums of understanding was not as encouraging, since none had been signed as yet. In view of that situation and the current high delayed deployment rates for military personnel, the Advisory Committee recommended upward adjustment of the delayed deployment factors for military personnel for the period from 4 April to 30 June 2004.

6. The Advisory Committee found the proposed organizational structure of the new Operation to be fragmented and top-heavy and had therefore requested a review to examine how it could be streamlined by combining smaller units and eliminating some high-level posts. It also recommended using less optimistic delayed deployment factors for military and other personnel for the start-up phase from 4 April to 30 June 2004 in view of the current high vacancy rates.

7. After an extensive discussion with representatives of the Secretary-General, the Advisory Committee had concluded that the organizational structure proposed for the mission did not appear to support the establishment of a second Deputy Special Representative post, at least not at the level of Assistant Secretary-General. It therefore recommended that, pending a comprehensive review, the post of Deputy Special Representative for Humanitarian Coordination, Recovery and Reconstruction should be approved at the D-2 level.

8. The Advisory Committee was concerned that little consideration had been given to how the proposed Joint Mission Analysis Cell would fit in with the system-wide plan for strengthening the security and safety of United Nations operations, staff and premises. It therefore recommended that the cell should not be established for the time being and that the matter should be considered in the context of the Secretary-General's comprehensive report on strengthening security, to be submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session.

9. The Advisory Committee had requested the Operation to make an effort to control its travel expenditure, which it considered high. It had also asked the Secretariat to analyse the experience of missions in implementing quick-impact projects, to examine the application of standard ratios for vehicles and information technology equipment, and to report on its findings in the next overview report of the Secretary-General on peacekeeping operations.

10. With regard to inventory management, the Advisory Committee noted that UNOCI planned to write off in 2004-2005 a significant amount of equipment that had been transferred to it from other missions. It understood that the supplies and strategic deployment stocks at the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi were depleted and that long procurement lead times could delay deployment of the Operation. Equipment such as air conditioners and computers, however, should be readily available in warehouses throughout the world. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations had reviewed the issue of the air conditioners that had been transferred from the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) at the request of the Advisory Committee and had concluded that they would not need replacement in 2004-2005. The Advisory Committee had therefore recommended that the resource requirements under facilities and infrastructure for the period from 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005 should be reduced by $218,500.

11. The Advisory Committee had also considered logistical cooperation between UNOCI and other missions such as the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and had indicated its findings in annex IV to its report.

Agenda item 170: Financing of the United Nations Operation in Burundi (A/58/802 and A/58/811)

12. **Ms. Pollard** (Director of the Peacekeeping Financing Division), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the interim budget for the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB) for the period from 21 April to 31 December 2004 (A/58/802), said that the Security Council, by its resolution 1545 (2004), had authorized the Operation for an initial period of six months as from 1 June 2004, with the intention to renew it for further periods.

13. The interim budget, to finance the Operation's immediate requirements, totalled $58,421,400 for the period from 21 April to 30 June 2004, and $145,267,500 for the period from 1 July to 31 December 2004, and took into account its personnel and the transfer of equipment with an estimated replacement value of $11.7 million from the strategic deployment stocks.

14. The General Assembly was requested to take the actions set out in paragraph 31 of the report, namely, the establishment of a special account for ONUB and appropriation and assessment of the sums needed to establish and maintain the Operation.

15. The full budget for the Operation, including results-based frameworks, would be presented for examination by the Advisory Committee and the General Assembly at the main part of the fifty-ninth session.

16. **Mr. Kuznetsov** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/58/811), said that the situation concerning the interim budget proposal for ONUB was similar to that of the interim budgets for the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) and the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), which the Committee had considered at its 47th meeting. The Advisory Committee therefore proposed that it should be dealt with in a similar fashion and referred the Committee to the observations contained in paragraphs 8 and 9 of its report on the interim budget for UNMISET for the period from 1 July to 31 December 2004 and on the interim budget for MINUSTAH for the period from 1 May to 31 December 2004 (A/58/809), which also applied to ONUB. The Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve a total commitment

authority in the amount of $156,043,900, inclusive of the amount which the Advisory Committee had previously authorized, and assessment of that amount for ONUB.

17. **Ms. Lock** (South Africa), speaking on behalf of the African Group on agenda items 167 and 170, said that the African Group realized that the budget proposals had been prepared at short notice, since the Security Council had established UNOCI only on 27 February 2004. The Council had also assigned a wide range of tasks to the Operation, and the General Assembly therefore had a collective responsibility to ensure that the Operation received adequate human and financial resources to fulfil its mandate.

18. The African Group was disappointed that the budget had been prepared and considered by the Advisory Committee at a time when a Chief Administrative Officer had not yet been appointed for the Operation. That situation might have adversely affected both the preparation of the budget submission and the justifications given to the Advisory Committee. Like the Advisory Committee, the Group urged the Secretariat to always ensure that the post of Chief Administrative Officer was filled as a matter of priority in the early stages of the establishment of any new mission.

19. The Group noted with concern that the Advisory Committee had recommended approval of a budget for the Operation that was 50 per cent lower than that proposed by the Secretary-General. It had deduced from the terse explanation offered by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 45 of its report (A/58/806) that it had been unable to determine the real needs of the Operation and that further consideration of the matter hinged on progress in streamlining the organizational structure, the signing of memorandums of understanding, and the availability of updated vacancy information. Nor was it clear how the reductions proposed in paragraphs 21, 25, 28, 30, 32, 42 and 45 correlated with the 50 per cent reduction recommended in paragraph 45 of the report.

20. The broad parameters of the mandate of UNOCI were clear and the results-based budgeting framework and the standard cost used for the various calculations should result in a reasonable budget. The Group was therefore concerned at the sweeping approach of the recommendation contained in paragraph 45 of the report, which, in the absence of clear explanations, did not provide the necessary assurances that the reduction would not adversely affect the functioning of the Operation, the speedy replacement of equipment provided to UNOCI by other peacekeeping operations in the region, and reimbursements to troop-contributing countries. The Secretariat should provide further clarification and make every effort in future to furnish the Advisory Committee with full justifications and adequate information to facilitate consideration of peacekeeping budgets.

21. The Group was not entirely convinced by the reasoning put forward by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 28 of its report to justify the downgrading of one of the two Deputy Special Representatives' posts. The tasks assigned to that individual were crucial to the success of the Operation's mandate and the level of the post should therefore not depend only on the number of support staff, but also on the functions assigned to it.

22. The Secretary-General had recently informed the Security Council about the number of internally displaced persons, refugees and affected host communities, the disruption of the public health and education systems, the decline in economic activity, the shortages of food and the existence of a serious humanitarian crisis in Côte d'Ivoire. That confirmed the Group's belief that the post of Deputy Special Representative should be established at the appropriate level to enhance coordination between UNOCI and other stakeholders in those important areas. There could be no lasting peace without development and no development without peace.

23. The Group noted the comments made by the Advisory Committee in the last part of paragraph 13 of its report and would welcome an explanation of their import. UNOCI was critical to the implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis and Accra II Agreements and the Group therefore hoped that the otherwise legitimate concerns noted by the Advisory Committee would not constrain the successful implementation of the Operation's mandate. The Secretariat should ensure that the next budget submission provided adequate information and reflected the review of the organizational structure which the Advisory Committee had requested. In the meantime, it should make every effort to ensure the full deployment of military contingents and the recruitment of civilian personnel.

24. The Security Council had taken a long-overdue decision in establishing the United Nations Operation in Burundi and the African Group trusted that the deployment of United Nations personnel would restore peace and bring reconciliation to that country.

25. The Group noted the Advisory Committee's intention to review the budgets for new missions, including UNMISET and UNOCI, at the Assembly's fifty-ninth session and urged the Secretariat to provide it with revised budget documents and all requested information early in that session, so that the Fifth Committee could then review all the budgets together before the end of October 2004.

26. **Mr. Agyeman** (Ghana) sought clarification of the last sentence of paragraph 13 of the report of the Advisory Committee, since it was unclear whether the Advisory Committee believed that it was the United Nations agencies in the countries of the region, or the countries of the region themselves, that were not fully involved in promoting regional cooperation. While the view of the Security Council that the countries of the region should cooperate more fully was appropriate in its clearly political context, the comment of the Advisory Committee, if indeed it was pointing to the countries of the region, was inappropriate in the administrative context of its report, and the necessary correction should be placed on record.

27. **Mr. Kuznetsov** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the view which the Advisory Committee had expressed in the last sentence of paragraph 13 of its report concerned cooperation among the various peacekeeping missions in the region for more effective border control. That issue had been discussed in a number of meetings of force commanders and peacekeeping mission administrations in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire. He apologized if the wording of the report had been unclear.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.